



## What is Eye Health Month?

- Eye Health Month is held annually in October by the Canadian Association of Optometrists (CAO) to promote the need for preventive eye care examinations;
- Provincial Optometrists Associations and CAO members play a crucial role during Eye Health Month;
- Nationally coordinated activities include media outreach, television advertising and special programs.

## 2009 Eye Health Month Theme

### Canadians and Screen Time – Be Kind to Your Eyes

This year's campaign will highlight computer vision syndrome as a result of high digital screen time use by Canadians. A survey conducted by Leger Marketing examined Canadian screen time use with a closer look at the Canadian baby boomer population. The survey demonstrated that baby boomers are spending at least seven hours in front of digital screens, with female baby boomers reporting higher usage of digital screens and more eye and vision ailments as a result. Data from the Leger Marketing

survey, as well as feedback from a survey conducted by a group of Canadian optometrists was integrated into the media materials, including news releases, key messages and matte stories to be distributed throughout Canada. As well, the materials discuss the rise of computer vision syndrome and encourage comprehensive eye exams. The video news release and audio news release will also be developed in conjunction with the storyline.

## Eye Health Month Objectives

- Promote Optometrists as key experts on eye health while providing tips to minimize strain and damage to the eyes;
- Promote practical tips to ease computer eye strain and the advice from Optometrists about relieving tired and irritated eyes.

### Topics:

- Computer Eye Strain: Steps for Relief;
- Computer Vision Syndrome and Computer Glasses;
- Worker productivity and Computer Vision Syndrome;
- Children and Computer Vision Syndrome.

## Eye Health Month 2009

### Public Relations Activities

With the assistance of a public relations firm, CAO will coordinate a range of PR activities leading up to and during Eye Health Month, including:

- National media relations campaign during October including lifestyle publications;

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## EYE DARE YOU 2008 Winner

Last year's winner, Dr. Elaine Kerr, of Coastal Eyecare Centres hosted the 10th annual Vision Fair in the Comox Valley on Vancouver Island to coincide with Eye Health Month. Six OD's as well as laser centres and ophthalmologists were on-site to answer questions. They also raised funds towards an overseas eye-care project, as well as collecting glasses for it.

**BCAO** has promoted more activity in conjunction with Eye Health Month than any other province for three consecutive years.

## EXAMPLES OF A FEW OF THE EYE HEALTH MONTH RESOURCES



Print Ad (5" W x 4" H)



Patient Recall Card (5.5" W x 3.5" H)



Poster for Open House (17" W x 11" H)



Theme Poster (5" W x 3.5" H)

- Matte Stories – prepared stories to be available for community newspapers;
- Video News Release – prepared coverage available to television news;
- Audio News Release – prepared coverage available to radio stations;
- Online outreach to parent bloggers, tech bloggers.

In addition, the national television campaign *Your Optometrist Knows Your Eyes Inside and Out* will run in the Fall, 2009 with increased advertising during the entire month of October.

### What can CAO members do to promote 2009 Eye Health Month?

CAO members are encouraged to plan activities during Eye Health Month. Meet with colleagues in your practice or community to share ideas and execute! Hold a staff meeting and solicit ideas. We have developed several resources based on this year's Eye Health Month theme which may be

downloaded from the CAO Member Portal as follows:

- Hold an Open House – opportunity to profile your practice and promote services/products related to the 2009 EHM theme (download poster and postcard invitation);
- Media Coverage – approach the local media about doing a story on Eye Health Month. Invite the media to visit your practice (download news release templates);
- Advertise as an individual or with your colleagues (download print ads – various sizes);
- Patient recall card – send a recall card using the 2009 EHM theme (download recall card);
- Powerpoint – make a presentation based on 2009 EHM theme (download template for PPT);
- Poster – download a 11x17 or 18x24 Eye Health Month poster and print locally (download posters).

Please email [dircomm@opto.ca](mailto:dircomm@opto.ca) if you have any problems with the downloads or their specifications.

The member portal has other electronic resources that can be found in the: benefits – resources/public-patient – education section. These may be used for other activities during Eye Health Month.

### Eye Dare You Contest

Your participation during Eye Health Month makes you eligible to enter the Eye Dare You Contest. Send an email to [dircomm@opto.ca](mailto:dircomm@opto.ca) describing what you did to promote Eye Health Month and your name will be entered for every activity. (Three activities means your name is entered three times.) All CAO members who enter are eligible to win a \$500 VISA gift certificate.

In addition, the province with the most active members will be given bragging rights as the provincial winner of the Eye Dare You Contest.

The BC Association of Optometrists has won the Eye Dare You Contest for the past 3 years.

## MATTE STORY FOR THE MEDIA

### Be Kind to Your Eyes

#### Tips for Minimizing Computer Vision Syndrome

Computer Vision Syndrome or CVS is a condition described by the Canadian Association of Optometrists as various eye and vision symptoms associated with prolonged exposure to digital screens, including computers, television, Blackberries, and cell phones. Symptoms of computer vision syndrome can include eye strain and fatigue, blurred, irritated and dry eyes, double vision and headaches. The majority of Canadians may not even realize they have this condition.

With the evolution of technology, more and more Canadians are spending time on digital screens, a significant increase from five years ago. While it's difficult to avoid the modern day conveniences these technological devices provide, it's important to minimize any strain to your eyes.

Consider these suggestions and give your eyes the break they need.

#### Follow the 20-20-20 Rule

The Canadian Association of Optometrists recommends for every 20 minutes of screen time, take a 20 second break to blink and focus your eyes on something 20 feet away. This will give your eyes a much-needed break and reduce some of the symptoms mentioned earlier.

#### Screen Smarts

Take a few seconds to adjust the brightness and contrast of your digital screen. The brightness and contrast should be set at comfortable intensity so that the letters are easily read.

#### Lighting can make all the difference

Room lighting should be diffused to reduce glare and reflections from your screen. Diffused lighting will help minimize screen glares that may cause squinting and eye strain.

#### Press "OFF"

If you experience any CVS symptoms, turn off your digital screen and visit your optometrist for a comprehensive eye exam. Ask your optometrist if your glasses are up to date and describe any symptoms you may be experiencing. Your eyes will thank you.

For more information on computer vision syndrome, or to find an optometrist in your area, please visit [www.opto.ca](http://www.opto.ca)

## Recommended Components of an Eye/Vision Examination for Computer Operators

The unique characteristics and high visual demands of computer work make eye and vision problems the most frequent health related problem experienced by computer operators. Uncorrected vision conditions, poor computer design and workplace ergonomics, and a highly demanding visual task can all contribute to the development of visual symptoms.

The examination should include:

1. A general systemic and ocular health history.
2. A specific patient history relating to computer use. It is recommended that the patient be prepared to provide the following information.
  - A. Type of computer work and nature of visual demands.
  - B. Number of hours, continuity and time of day for computer work.
  - C. Size and color of screen and screen characters.
  - D. Position and working distances of computer screen and other visual tasks.
  - E. General characteristics of light sources and their locations within the work area.
  - F. Nature, severity and frequency of symptoms associated with computer work.
3. Measurement of unaided and aided visual acuity at distance and appropriate near working distances.
4. Evaluation of internal and external eye health, (e.g., ophthalmoscopy, biomicroscopy, tonometry, visual fields, tear analysis, etc.)
5. Refraction at distance and near working distances.
6. Assessment of eye focusing (e.g., accommodative amplitude and facility).
7. Evaluation of eye coordination and eye movement skills (e.g., binocular vision analysis, ocular motility).

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